

THE CAPTAIN OF the KANSAS

By LOUIS TRACY.

Author of "The Wings of the Morning," "The Pillar of Light," Etc.

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—On the steamer Kansas, leaving Valparaiso for England, are Miss Elsie Maxwell, fleeing from the unwelcome attentions of Pedro Ventana, and Miss Isabel Baring. Among the other passengers is Count Edouard de Poncillit. The two girls become interested in Captain Courtney, the commander of the Kansas, and in Joey, his fox terrier. Courtney is compelled to shoot a Chilean who has tried to kill Chief Officer Boyle.

CHAPTER II.—The Chilean, Francisco, a coal passer, tells of having been held before her departure from Valparaiso. His wound, which is not serious, is attended to by Dr. Christobal, a passenger. At night the Kansas runs into a heavy storm, during which an explosion in the engine room is heard.

CHAPTER III.—Courtney tells the passengers that the ship is in peril, and the boats are made ready. The danger to the vessel and its passengers is from mutiny by the Chilean crew and stewards.

CHAPTER IV.—The explosion has killed and wounded several men and wrecked the ship's engines. Drifting helplessly, the Kansas strikes a reef 20 miles from the perilous Chilean coast.

CHAPTER V.—Courtney, with Gray and Tollemache, two of the passengers, overcomes a mob of stewards and kitchen hands, but in the struggle the boats Boyle is badly hurt. Isabel, crazed with terror of the storm, mistakes Elsie by calling her an emissary of Ventana. Elsie is left behind by accident when the other women passengers are taken off the Kansas in one of the lifeboats.

CHAPTER VI.—Elsie accidentally sees part of a letter addressed to the captain. In it the unknown writer refers to "the woman destined to be your wife." Elsie, Courtney, Christobal, an engineer named Walker, and Tollemache, with some wounded men, among them Boyle and Francisco, are compelled to remain on the Kansas, all the boats being gone or smashed. The steamer floats clear of the reef.

CHAPTER VII.—In the dark the Kansas drifts on to an unknown destination, but Courtney discovers at dawn that land is near.

CHAPTER VIII.—After drifting into a narrow fiord, the Kansas drops anchor, and Courtney sets Walker to repairing the engines. The vessel is attacked by savages.

CHAPTER IX.

QUICKLY as Elsie had reached the deck, the warlike sounds which disturbed her rest had ceased. Save for the footsteps of men whom she could not see, the prevalent noises were caused only by wind and sleet. While she was hurrying forward as rapidly as the darkness permitted, the lights were switched on with a suddenness that made her gasp. The dog began to bark again, but it was easy to distinguish his sharp yelps of excitement and defiance from the earlier notes of alarmed suspicion. In fact, Joey himself was the first to discover the stealthy approach of the Indians. Courtney and Tollemache, who took the middle watch, from midnight to 4 a. m., had failed to note the presence of several canoes on the ink black surface of the bay until the dog warned them by growling and ruffling the bristles on his back. The night was pitch dark. The moon was not only hidden by the hills of the island, but frequent storms of rain and hail rendered it impossible while they raged to see or hear beyond the distance of a few feet.

In all probability as the canoes bore down from windward Joey had sensed them. He also gave the highly important information as to the quarter from which attack might be expected. Three men at least had gained the deck, but the prompt use of a revolver had caused them to retreat silently and speedily as they had appeared. That was all. There was no actual fight. The phantoms vanished as silently as they came. The only external lights on the ship were the mast-head and side lights hoisted by Courtney to reveal the steamer's whereabouts in case one of the boats chanced to be driven into the bay during the dark hours. There was an electric lamp turned on in the donkey engine room and another in the main saloon, but means were taken to exclude them from showing without. If the Indians meant to be actively hostile, lights on board would be more helpful to the assailants than to the assailed.

When the captain and Tollemache followed Joey's lead, they discerned three demonic figures vaguely outlined by the ruddy glare of the port light in the very act of climbing the rails. They fired instantly, and the naked forms vanished. Both men thought they heard the splashing caused by the leaping or falling of the Indians into the sea. By the same subdued radiance Courtney made out the top of a pole or mast sticking up close to the ship's side. He leaned over, fired a couple of shots downward at random, seized the pole and lashed it to a stanchion with a loose rope end, a remnant of one of the awnings. A small craft, even an Indian canoe, would be most useful, and its capture might tend to scare the attackers.

Telling Tollemache to mount guard, he raced back to the saloon hatch and summoned assistance. The others searched the ship in small detachments, but the Indians were gone. It was manifest that none beyond those driven off at the first onset had secured a footing on deck. Then, taking the risk of being shot at, Courtney ordered the lights to be turned on, and the first person he saw clearly was Elsie. He was almost genuinely angry with her.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded. She was learning not to fear his brusque ways. He was no carpet knight and men who carry their lives

in their hands do not pick and choose their words.

"I thought you were in danger, so I came to help," she said calmly.

"You must go back to your cabin at once."

"Why? Of what avail is the safety of my cabin if you are killed?"

A woman's logic is apt to be irritating when one expects a flight of arrows or it may be, a gunshot out of the blackness a few feet away.

"For goodness' sake, stand here, then!" he cried, seizing her arm and compelling her to shelter behind the heavy molding which carried the bridge. Then he quitted her for a moment in order to dispatch a Chilean sailor for a lantern and a long cord. He wished to investigate the captured canoe.

The lantern was brought. Courtney stood on the lowermost rail and carefully paid out a rope to which the light was slung. He was far too brave a man to take undue risks. He was ready to shoot instantly if need be, and by his instructions Tollemache and Walker kept watch as best they could in case other canoes were lying close to the ship.

Any doubt in this regard was dispelled in a singular manner. The flickering rays of the lantern had barely revealed the primitive craft lying alongside when a voice came from the depths, crying in broken Spanish:

"Don't shoot, señores! Spare me, for the love of heaven! I am a white man from Argentina!"

Christobal and Elsie alone understood the exact significance of the words.

Courtney of course knew what language was being spoken, and it was easy to guess the nature of the appeal. But the lantern showed that the canoe was empty. In the center lay the Fuegian fire, its embers covered with a small hide. The pole, fastened to a crosspiece in the thwart, was not a mast, but had evidently been shipped in order to give speedy access to the deck by climbing.

Then Courtney caught sight of two hands clinging to the stern of the canoe. He swung the lantern in that direction, and an extraordinary and even an affrighting object became visible. A caricature of a human head was raised slightly above the level of the water. It was crowned by a shock of coarse black knotted hair tied back from the brows by a fillet of white feathers. An intensely black face, crossed by two bars of red and white pigment, reaching from ear to ear and covering eyelids, nose and lips, was upturned to the watchers from the deck. The colors were vivid enough notwithstanding the sheets of rain which blew in gusts against the ship's side, dimming the dull light of a storm proof lamp, to convey a most uncanny effect. Nor did Courtney remove either his eyes or the revolver while he said to Christobal:

"Ask him who he is and what he wants."

The answer was intelligible enough: "I am a miner from Argentina. I have been among these Indians five years. When their attack failed I thought there was a chance of escape. For pity's sake, señor, help me instantly or I shall die from the cold."

"Have the Indians gone?" asked Christobal.

"Yes. They thought to surprise you. When they came again it will be by daylight, as they are afraid of the dark. But be quick, I implore you. My hands are numb."

There was no resisting the man's appeal. A rope ladder was lowered, and a Chilean sailor went down in obedience to the captain's order, though he disliked the job and crossed himself before descending. He passed a rope under the fugitive's armpits and with aid from the deck hoisted him aboard. The unfortunate miner gave proof of his wretched state by promptly collapsing in a faint, with a sigh of "Madre de Dios!"

His only garments were a species of waistcoat and rough trousers of untrimmed guanaco hide. The white skin of his breast and legs, though darkened by exposure, showed that he had told the truth as to his descent, notwithstanding the amazing daubs on his face. His hair, stiffened with black grease, stood out all around his head, and the same oily composition had been used to blacken his forehead, neck and hands.

Some brandy and hot water, combined with the warmth of the saloon, soon revived him. He ate a quantity of bread with the eagerness of a man suffering from starvation.

Christobal brought him to the chart house, where most of the others were assembled, and there questioned him.

It was a most astonishing story which Francisco Suarez, gold miner and prospector, laid before an exceedingly attentive audience. As the man spoke so did he recover the freer usage of a civilized tongue. At first his words had a hoarse, guttural sound, but Dr. Christobal's questions seemed to awaken dormant memories, and every one noticed, not least those who had small knowledge of Spanish, that he had practically recovered command of the language at the end of half an hour.

And this was what he told them: He, with these partners and a few in-

dians from the pampas, had set out on a gold prospecting expedition on the headwaters of the Gallegos river. They were disappointed in their search until they crossed the cordillera and sighted the gloomy shores of Last Hope Inlet, leading into Smyth channel. There they found alluvial sand and gold bearing quartz, yielding but poor results. Unfortunately some natives assured them that the metal they sought abounded in Hanover Island. They obtained canoes, voyaged down the long inlet, crossed the strait and struck inland toward the unknown mountains beyond the swamps of Ellen bay.

After enduring all the hardships entailed by life in such a wild country they blundered into a gully where a brief analysis of the detritus gave a result per ton which was not to be measured by ounces, but by pounds.

White men and Indians alike caught the fever. They accumulated a useless hoard, having no means to transport other than their own backs, and then, all precautions being relaxed, the nomad Indians, whom they despised, rushed the camp when they were sleeping. They were nearly all killed by stones shot from slings. Suarez was only stunned, and he and a Spaniard, with two Indians, were reserved for future slaughter.

"The others were eaten," he said, "and their bones were used for making fires. I saw my friend Giacomo felled like a bullock, and the Indians as well. By chance I was the last. I had no hope of escape. I was too downcast even to make a flight of it when, at the eleventh hour, the mad idea seized me that I might please and astonish my captors by performing a few sleight of hand tricks. Dios, how they gaped! They had never seen the like. All the tribe was summoned to watch me."

Then the poor fellow began to cry. "Holy mother! Think of me playing the fool before those brutes! I became their medicine man. I fought and killed my only rival, and since then I have doctored a few of the chief men among them, so they took me into the tribe and always managed to procure me such food as I could eat. They gave me roots and dried meat when they themselves were lying on putrid blubber or worse, because they kill all the old women as soon as famine threatens."

Courtney broke in on the Spaniard's recital with a question of direct interest.

"Ask him, Christobal, why he said those things would come again by daylight."

"Because they have guns and can use them," was the appalling answer given by Suarez. "They secured the rifles belonging to my party, and one of them who had often seen ship's officers shooting wild geese understood the method of loading and aiming. They will not waste the cartridges on game, but keep them for tribal warfare, and they think a gun cannot shoot in the dark. Tonight they only attempted a surprise and made off the moment they were discovered. Tomorrow or next day they will swarm round the ship in hundreds and fire at us with rifles, bows and slings. They do most harm with the slings and arrows, as they hold the gun away from the shoulder, but they can cast a heavy pebble from a sling quite as far and almost as straight as a revolver can shoot."

"How do they know the ship will not sail at once?" demanded Courtney.

Suarez laughed hysterically with the mirth which is akin to tears when the query was explained to him. He looked bizarre enough under ordinary conditions, but laughter converted him into a fair semblance of one of those bloodcurdling demons which a Japanese artist loves to depict. Evidently he depended on makeup to supplement his powers as a conjurer.

"It is as much as a canoe can manage in fine weather to reach the island out there, which they call Seal Island," he cried, pointing toward the locality of White Horse Island. "Even the Indians were astonished to see so big a ship anchored here safely. They have watched plenty of wrecks outside, and hardly anything comes ashore. At any rate, they are quite sure you cannot go back."

It would be idle to deny that the Spaniard's words sent a chill of apprehension down the spines of some of those present, but the captain said quietly:

"Where a ship is concerned, if she can enter on the flood she can go out on the ebb. How came you to escape tonight?"

Tears stood again in Suarez's eyes as he replied:

"When I heard their plan I imagined they would be driven off, provided a watch were kept. I resolved to risk all in the attempt to reach the company of civilized men once more. I do not care what the outcome may be. If I can help you to overcome them, I am ready to do so; if not, I will die by your side. Tonight I followed in a canoe unseen. When I heard the shooting I leaped overboard and swam to the ship. It was lucky for me some one seized the canoe which I found there. The men in her had to swim to other canoes, and two were wounded. I heard them say. This caused some confusion, and I had something to grasp when I reached the ship; otherwise I must have been drowned, as the water was very cold."

"Can you speak the Aiscalof language?"

"Is that what you call them? Their own name for the tribe is the 'Feathered People,' because all their chief men and heads of families wear these things," and he touched his headdress. "Yes, I know nearly all their words. They don't use a great many. One word may have several meanings, according to the pitch of the voice."

Suddenly his voice failed him. Through the words came fluent, his

long "Ussah" vocal chords were unequal to the strain of measured speech. He asked hoarsely for some hot water. When Courtney next came across him in the saloon he was asleep and changed so greatly by the removal of pigments from his face that it was difficult to regard him as the same being.

His story was unquestionably true. Tollemache, who had fought an offshoot tribe of these same Indians; Christobal, who vouched for the Argentine accent, and Elsie, who seemed to have read such rare books of travel as dealt with that little known part of the world, bore out the reasonableness of his statements. The only individual on board who regarded him with suspicion was Joey, and even Joey was satisfied when Suarez had washed him self.

It was daylight again, a dawn of dense mist, without wind or hail, ere any member of the ship's company thought of sleep. Then Elsie went to her cabin and dreamed of a river of molten gold, down which she was compelled to sail in a cockleshell boat, while fantastic monsters swam around and eyed her suspiciously.

When at last she awoke after a few hours of less exciting slumber she came out on deck to find the sun shining on a fairland of green and blue and diamond white, with gaunt gray rocks and groves of copper beeches to frame the picture. There was no pillar of smoke on the lower hills to bear silent testimony to the presence of the Indians, but the canoe lying alongside told her that the previous night's events were no part of her dreams, and a man whom she did not recognize—a man with closely cropped gray hair and a deeply lined, weather tanned face from which a pair of sunken, flashing eyes looked kindly at her—said in Spanish:

"Good morning, señorita. I hope I did not startle you when I came aboard. And I said things I should not have said in the presence of a lady. But, believe me, señorita, I was drunk with delight."

(To Be Continued.)

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

[Society news, written or telephoned to the society editor of The Argus, will be gladly received and published. But in either case the identity of the sender must be made known, to insure reliability. Written notices must bear signature and address.]

Music Students' Club.—A miscellaneous meeting of the Music Students' club was held yesterday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Ben Cable, 415 Twenty-ninth street, and a delightful program was carried out, as follows:

Vocal—
(a) "Over the Hills"..... Behr
(b) "A Little Winding Way"..... Romald
Miss R. R. Reynolds.

Piano—
"La Regata Venezolana"..... Liszt
Mrs. W. D. Middleton, substitute for Miss Mary Wright.

Vocal—
(a) "When I Was With My Dearie"..... Hawley
(b) "I Hid My Love"..... D'Hardelet
Mrs. A. P. Griggs, substitute for Mrs. Arnold Peterson.

Piano—
Improvisation..... MacDowell
Miss Olga Junge, substitute for Mrs. A. Priestler.

Vocal—
(a) "Ich Trage Meine Mille"..... Strauss
(b) "Heimliche Anseherung"..... Strauss
Miss Grace Ames.

Piano—
Etude No. 10, Opus No. 3..... Chopin
Miss Gertrude Branigan, substitute for Miss Meta Lerch.

The program was followed by a delightful social hour and lunch was served. Next Monday the members of the club will give a sacred recital at the Calvary Baptist church, Davenport, complimentary to their friends. The next regular meeting will be held

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in dry and continued heat, as in an oven." If Webster were alive to-day he would say that

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They are put up in HEINZ Improved Tins hermetically sealed without solder—there is no lead to come in contact with the contents of the tin, so that all the natural goodness of the beans is retained in all its purity from oven to your table.

When you ask for baked beans—get baked beans. Ask for the HEINZ kind, then you're sure.

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One of the 57

at the home of Mrs. S. B. Lafferty, 625 East Locust street, Davenport.

Chaminade Club Musicales.—The annual complimentary musicale of the Chaminade club, a musical organization, was held yesterday afternoon at the Outing club, Davenport. The program was given by a quintet of Rock Island and Moline ladies and an excellent entertainment was provided. The ladies giving the program were Miss Hazel Mungler, cello; Miss Florence Freistat, violin; Mrs. Ada Enrikkin Peterson, voice; Miss Clara Sloan, piano, and Mrs. Fred Leavens, harp. Following is the program as given: "Love Song".....Guy d'Hardelet Quintet.

"Evening Star" (from Tannhauser).....Wagner-Schulz Quintet.

"Nocturne".....Behr

Miss Freistat, Miss Mungler, Mrs. Leavens.

"La Serenade".....Tosti

Mrs. Peterson.

"Traum Der Sennerrin".....Labitsky

Miss Freistat.

"Anschungung".....Schumann

"Melodie Italienne".....Moszkowski

Miss Sloan.

"Minuet".....Von Gluck

Miss Freistat, Miss Mungler, Mrs. Leavens.

"Valse Caprice".....Verdalle

Mrs. Leavens.

"Harmony".....Del Riego

Quintet.

Heidman-Fowler.—Miss Clara E. Fowler of this city and Charles Heidman of South Rock Island, attended by Will Paulsen, were quietly married at Clinton, Iowa, last evening at 8 o'clock at the parsonage of the United Presbyterian church, Rev. Mr. Benson performing the ceremony. Mr. and Mrs. Heidman then departed for Chicago where he has accepted a position with the Chicago Sash and Door and Blinds Manufacturing company.

DAILY SHORT STORY.

(Continued from Page Four.)

a confusion of cheers and sobs, and then consciousness left him.

When he came to himself he was lying on a sofa in Mr. Osborne's home, with Dr. Gordon and George Evans beside him.

"Jessie?" he queried faintly.

"Is safe and well," Dr. Gordon replied. "She escaped entirely without injury, and her father has carried her almost by main force to her room to get the rest she needs. In fact," he added, "you monopolized the woman's right of fainting."

"It was that confounded dope of yours," Harry retorted.

"It came near costing your life; but, thank God, you both escaped. Your injuries are very slight, although your bandages look formidable. The burns are only surface burns and won't even spoil your beauty, and now I must go to Miss Osborne."

As the door closed on Dr. Gordon, George Evans turned to his friend.

"What you said about Miss Osborne's sense of honor is all right, but admit like a man that I had a truer estimate of her courage. Or, say," he added jokingly, although there was a suspicious tremor in his voice, "perhaps the engagement is called off since you don't admire that type."

"I can't joke about it, George," Nell answered gravely. "The type of girl I pictured is all right in theory, but—"

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Noah Webster was brought up in New England on baked beans. His mother didn't boil them or steam them and call them baked. She really baked them.

Later on, Noah wrote a dictionary. That dictionary is still an authority. In it Webster defines "bake" as "to prepare or cook food

Rural Union Township Ticket. The Rural township union ticket, which as usual has no opposition, follows:

Town Clerk—W. J. Caughey.
Assessor—J. M. Hutchinson.
Collector—J. W. Beck.
Commissioner of Highways—John Beck.

Justice of the Peace—F. W. Wylie.

Constable—H. H. Worthington.

School Trustee—R. M. Hanna.

The questions "Shall this town become anti-saloon territory?" and

"Shall this town take charge of the Baulah and Homestead cemeteries?" will go on the ballot.

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Sugar cured—they must be good.

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